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ABSTRACT

The value of reading ability lies in its use rather than its possession; therefore, how students feel about reading may be as important as whether or not they are able to read. Helping children develop positive attitudes toward reading, learning the reading interests of children, and helping children develop positive self-concepts through successful reading experiences should be the major objectives of a reading program. Assessment of these affective qualities is possible and important. Among the assessment instruments available to educators are: the Estes Reading Attitude Scale, Rowell's Scale of Reading Attitude Based on Behavior, Heathington and Alexander's Observation Checklist to Assess Reading Attitudes, Kennedy and Halinski's Attitude Scale, the Wish Test, and the Incomplete Sentences Test. These devices are easy to administer and provide helpful information for educators as they strive to assess and enhance the affective domain. (FL)

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INFORMAL AFFECTIVE ASSESSMENT: INSIGHTS AND STRATEGIES

Penny J. Nielsen

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More educators today are recognizing the importance of the affective domain. It is becomingly increasingly evident that many students who have reading problems have a negative attitude toward reading, a poor self-concept, and few reading interests. The teacher's role in considering the affective domain is a crucial factor in education.

This paper will address methods of assessing and enhancing attitude toward reading, reading interests, and self-concept. We feel that children should learn that reading is a joyful process and that learning to read should be fun. Some teachers forget the affective domain and forget that reading skills are not ends in themselves.

Besides determining whether students can read we need to ask: "Will students read?" How students feel about reading is as important as whether they are able to read. The value of reading ability lies in its use rather than its possession.

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The development of positive attitude toward reading is an important objective of the reading program. Interest in the development and maintenance of positive attitude toward reading is increasing. Educators are seeking to make reading a process that children will use throughout their lifetime. Attitudes play an extremely vital role in establishing the lifelong reading habit.

Interest plays a significant role in motivating students to read. There is value in learning the reading interests of children and capitalizing upon these reading interests for reading instruction. Students must be provided with a wide variety of interesting, attractive reading materials.

Helping students to develop positive self-concepts is a frequent concern of educators. Guiding learners toward successful reading experiences may help them to attain security and to approach other activities with confidence.

However, continued lack of success with reading may cause some students to develop feelings of insecurity and frustration which may lead to avoidance of reading. It is important to evaluate and enhance self-concept. Educators should provide an atmosphere for children which will lessen criticism, hostility, and ridicule, and which will stimulate tolerance, encouragement, and acceptance.

One goal of a reading program should be the development of a positive attitude toward reading. Perhaps nothing contributes to a child's reading

progress more than his attitude toward reading. Since the value of reading ability lies in its use rather than its possession, how students feel about reading may be as important as whether or not they are able to read.

The Estes Reading Attitude Scale is a Likert scale which gives summated scores. It was developed for children in grades three through twelve. The scale is easy to administer and may be read orally to students if you feel they are unable to read the items.

Estes Reading Attitude Scale

A=strongly agree
B=agree
C=undecided
D=disagree
E=strongly disagree

1. Reading is for learning but not for enjoyment.
2. Money spent on books is well-spent.
3. There is nothing to be gained from reading books.
4. Books are a bore.
5. Reading is a good way to spend spare time.
6. Sharing books in class is a waste of time.
7. Reading turns me on.
8. Reading is only for grade grubbers.
9. Books aren't usually good enough to finish.
10. Reading is rewarding to me.
11. Reading becomes boring after about an hour.
12. Most books are too long and dull.
13. Free reading doesn't teach anything.
14. There should be more time for free reading during the school day.
15. There are many books which I hope to read.
16. Books should not be read except for class requirements.
17. Reading is something I can do without.
18. A certain amount of summer vacation should be set aside for reading.
19. Books make good presents.
20. Reading is dull.

Items	Response Values				
	A	B	C	D	E
The negative items:					
Nos. 1,3,4,6, 8,9,11,12, 13,16,17,20	1	2	3	4	5
The positive items:					
Nos. 2,5,7,10, 14,15,18,19	5	4	3	2	1

Response values to assign to each possible response to each item.

Estes, T.H. A scale to measure attitudes toward reading. Journal of Reading, 1971, 15, 135-138.

Rowell developed a scale of reading attitudes based on behavior. Three conclusions were drawn during the development of this scale: 1. Attitude is reflected in children's behavior. 2. This behavior can be recorded by an observer who uses a properly designed instrument. 3. The instrument should provide the observer the opportunity to check reactions to reading situations.

This is a Likert scale with summated ratings. The observer needs more than a brief period to record how children behave in various reading situations. If only a brief observation period is used, gross misinterpretation could take place. The scale was used with students in grades four and five.

Items 7-13 relate to reading for pleasure, items 14-16 are for reading in the content areas, and items I-6 are for reading in reading class.

A Scale of Reading Attitude Based on Behavior

Name of student _____ Grade ____ Date _____

School _____ Observer _____

Directions: Check the most appropriate of the five blanks by each item below. Only one blank by each item should be checked.

		Always Occurs	Often Occurs	Occasionally Occurs	Seldom Occurs	Never Occurs
1.	The student exhibits a strong desire to come to the reading circle or to have reading instruction take place.	____	____	____	____	____
2.	The student is enthusiastic and interested in participating once he comes to the reading circle or the reading class begins.	____	____	____	____	____
3.	The student asks permission or raises his hand to read orally.	____	____	____	____	____
4.	When called upon to read orally the student eagerly does so.	____	____	____	____	____
5.	The student very willingly answers a question asked him in the reading class.	____	____	____	____	____
6.	Contributions in the way of voluntary discussions are made by the student in the reading class.	____	____	____	____	____
7.	The student expresses a desire to be read to by you or someone else, and he attentively listens while this is taking place.	____	____	____	____	____
8.	The student makes an effort to read printed materials on bulletin boards, charts, or other displays having writing on them.	____	____	____	____	____
9.	The student elects to read a book when the class has permission to choose a "free-time" activity.	____	____	____	____	____

	Always Occurs	Often Occurs	Occasionally Occurs	Seldom Occurs	Never Occurs
10. The student expresses genuine interest in going to the school's library	____	____	____	____	____
11. The student discusses with you (the teacher) or members of the class those items he has read from the newspaper, magazines, or similar materials.	____	____	____	____	____
12. The student voluntarily and enthusiastically discusses with others the book he has read or is reading.	____	____	____	____	____
13. The student listens attentively while other students share their reading experiences with the group.	____	____	____	____	____
14. The student expresses eagerness to read printed materials in the content areas.	____	____	____	____	____
15. The student goes beyond the textbook or usual reading assignment in searching for other materials to read.	____	____	____	____	____
16. The student contributes to group discussions that are based on reading assignments made in the content areas.	____	____	____	____	____

Powell, C. G. An attitude scale for reading. The Reading Teacher, 1972, 25, 442-447.

Heathington and Alexander feel that the value of observation lies in its comprehensiveness. Children's behavior and comments can be viewed over a period of time and in many reading situations. This provides teachers with insight into how children feel about reading in various situations: school and non school reading, library reading, and general reading.

Sixty children in grades one through six were interviewed individually and asked two questions: "What do children your age say and do when they dislike reading? What do they say and do when they like reading?" The observation scale was developed in response to student answers to these two questions. A two week observation period is suggested to allow time to observe students in the various reading situations.

Observation Checklist to Assess Reading Attitudes

In the two-week period, has the child:

		Yes	No
1.	Seemed happy when engaged in reading activities?	____	____
2.	Volunteered to read aloud in class?	____	____
3.	Read a book during free time?	____	____
4.	Mentioned reading a book at home?	____	____
5.	Chosen reading over other activities (playing games, coloring, talking, etc.)?	____	____
6.	Made requests to go to the library?	____	____
7.	Checked out books at the library?	____	____
8.	Talked about books he/she has read?	____	____
9.	Finished most of the books she/he has started?	____	____
10.	Mentioned books she/he has at home?	____	____

Heathington, B. S. and Alexander, J. E. A child-based observation checklist to assess attitudes toward reading. The Reading Teacher, 1978, 31, 769-771.

Kennedy and Halinski developed a four point Likert scale with summated ratings for upper grade students. Students were asked to respond to open-ended sentences such as:

I enjoy reading because . . .

I dislike reading because . . .

Reading is difficult for me because . . .

The kinds of things I like to read are . . .

The kinds of things I don't like to read are . . .

The actual student response terminology was used in developing the instrument which has seventy items.

Strongly Agree
Agree
Disagree
Strongly Disagree

1. Reading is difficult for me.
2. I read only what I have to.
3. Reading helps me form opinions.
4. I would rather read than do anything else.
5. Authors seem to like words that are hard to understand.
6. I can forget my problems when I read.
7. It takes me a long time to read anything.
8. Reading broadens my imagination.
9. There are very few things that I find interesting to read.
10. Reading entertains me.
11. I dislike reading because most of the time I am being forced to read.
12. I don't believe there's anyone more interested in readin g than I am.
13. I read too slow.
14. Reading has always been my favorite pastime.
15. Reading gives me self-confidence.
16. It's hard to just sit and read.
17. Reading helps me find a better way to communicate with people.
18. I have very little trouble understanding what I read.
19. Reading is very important to me.
20. I don't care to take the time to read.
21. I can learn much about my future from reading.
22. I am a good reader.
23. I always finish what I start to read.
24. Reading broadens my mind.
25. Reading is easy.
26. I like to read to learn about people.
27. Reading bores me.
28. I usually do not understand what is happening in a story.
29. Reading keeps me informed.
30. Reading is a fun way of learning.
31. Reading is too complicated.
32. Reading improves my vocabulary.
33. I have never found an assigned reading to be boring.
34. I read a lot.
35. Reading helps me understand problems that other people have.
36. Reading just doesn't appeal to me.
37. Books are an artistic expression.
38. When I read I can't keep my mind on the subject.
39. I can't sit still long enough to read.
40. Reading turns me off.
41. Reading helps me understand my personal problems.
42. Reading stimulates thought.
43. I have yet to read anything which I did not find interesting.
44. I can learn much about my future from reading.
45. Reading helps me to identify with people I want to be like
46. Reading is difficult because of those big words.
47. I am seldom in a mood to read
48. I like to read about other people's experiences in life.
49. I sometimes become a characte in the book I am reading.
50. I get tired when I read.
51. When I read there are very few words I do not understand
52. I like keeping up on new ide
53. Reading relaxes me.
54. Reading is a pleasant pastim
55. I have to read material over and over to get something ou of it.
56. I am a very fast reader.
57. By reading I meet people and places I have never met befo
58. I enjoy taking tests over wh I read.
59. It's hard to get interested reading things which are assigned.

60. I read for hours at a time.
61. Whenever I have some free time I always read .
62. I hate to read.
63. I seldom get any new ideas from reading.
64. I am an avid reader.
65. Reading is always an exciting experience.
66. Reading takes too much concentration.
67. No one ever had to force me to read anything.
68. Reading helps you think about things in a new way.
69. I like to read.
70. All books are interesting.

Kennedy, L.D., & Halinski, R.S. Measuring attitudes: an extra dimension. Journal of Reading, 1975, 18, 518-522.

The Wish Test and Incomplete Sentences are projective type devices which allow students to give honest answers. Attitude toward reading, self-concept, and reading interests are areas included in the Wish Test and Incomplete Sentences. These devices are easy to administer and provide helpful information for educators as they strive to assess and enhance the affective domain.

Name_____ Grade_____Teacher_____ Date_____

WISH TEST

1. I wish I were_____
2. I wish that I could have_____
3. I wish that my mother_____
4. I wish that my teacher_____
5. I wish that I would not have to_____
6. I wish that my father_____
7. I wish that my friends_____
8. I wish that my brothers and sisters_____
9. I wish that I were not_____
10. I wish that school_____
11. I wish that my home_____
12. I wish more than anything else that_____
13. I wish that reading_____
14. I wish that I were able to_____
15. I wish that my family_____

Miller, W. H. Reading diagnosis Kit. New York: The Center for Applied Research in Education, 1974, 258.

Name_____ Grade_____ Teacher_____ Date_____

INCOMPLETE SENTENCES TEST (Intermediate-grade level)

1. It is hard for me to_____
2. It makes me sad when_____
3. I never want to_____
4. I wish that my father_____
5. The thing that I like best about reading is_____
6. I think that my family is_____
7. When I grow up, I would like to_____
8. It is easy for me to_____
9. I think that my teacher is_____
10. I always have had trouble with_____
11. I wish that my mother_____
12. I think that reading books is_____
13. I think that my brother is_____
14. The thing that I like best about being at home is_____
15. I think that school is_____
16. I sometimes worry about_____
17. Sometimes the words in reading_____
18. I think that my favorite person is_____
19. I sometimes am afraid of_____
20. My favorite day of the week is_____
21. I wish that I_____
22. It makes me angry when_____
23. I would like to be able to_____
24. I get ashamed when_____
25. I think that the hardest thing about reading is_____

The Incomplete Sentences Test

26. I really like it when my father_____

27. The thing that I like best about school is_____

28. I think that reading comic books is_____

29. I think that my sister is_____

30. I think that most teachers are_____

31. I like to read books about_____

32. It makes me happy when_____

33. One thing that I don't like about school is_____

34. I really like it when my mother_____

35. I feel proud of myself when_____

Miller, J. H. Reading diagnosis Kit. New York: The Center for Applied Research in Education, 1974, 252-253.

SUMMARY

Assessment of attitude toward reading, reading interests, and self-concept is possible and important. Current evidence suggests that the reading habits an individual develops in elementary school set the pattern for his reading habits as an adult.

The most important long-range objective for a reading program is to develop individuals who can read and who do read. The fact that schools have failed to fully attain this objective in the past is evidenced by the large number of adults who can read but who seldom read either for information or enjoyment.

Perhaps these adults felt that reading was a "subject" in school, and, as such, had little relevance to their lives. Perhaps they were turned off by too much reading instruction and not enough reading. Reading skills are not ends in themselves. Educators must strive to help individuals discover the value of reading and show that reading is enjoyable. Assessment and enhancement of attitude toward reading, self-concept, and reading interests can help reach this goal.